

Thrilling
Western
Adventures

with

KIT WEST

and
the

**PRINCE OF
PIONEERS**

ANC



AN *Avon* COMIC

NO. 5



COW PUNCHER



[illegible]

The **FLAMING FINGERS** OF DEATH



A STEALTHY HAND SENDS THE QUIET FOREST INTO A BLAZING INFERNO OF BURNING DEATH...A BEAUTIFUL GIRL IS LEFT THERE TO PERISH AMID THE LEAPING FLAMES. WHY...? IT'S A PUZZLE THAT, WERE IT NOT FOR THE TEXAS RANGER, MAY WELL HAVE GONE UNSOLVED, AND WITH IT, A KILLER WOULD HAVE BEEN LEFT FREE TO TAKE HIS PLACE AMONG HONEST MEN! BUT THE TEXAS RANGER, SYMBOL OF JUSTICE AND HONOR IN THE OLD WEST, UNRAVELS THE PUZZLE THAT BEGAN IN THE FLAMING FOREST WHEN HE FOUGHT THE **FLAMING FINGERS OF DEATH!!!**

ONE AFTERNOON, THE TEXAS RANGER IS PEACEFULLY RIDING THROUGH THE FOREST, WHEN....



EASY, BOY...
MAYBE...SAY,
WAIT A
MINUTE!
I SMELL
SMOKE!

GREAT SHOOTIN'---!
IT'S A FOREST FIRE! AND
IT'S COMING FAST, TOO!
I'D BETTER GET TO
TOWN AND WARN
EVERYONE!



WHOA----/
THAT HORSE---
THE RIDER IS
MISSING!

GIDDAP, BOY---! THE
WIND IS FROM THE
WEST! WE CAN GET
AHEAD OF THE
FLAMES THIS
WAY!



THE RIDER OF THAT
HORSE MAY BE BACK
IN THOSE FLAMES!
C'MON, BOY,
LET'S GO!



RACING BACK INTO THE BURNING FOREST, THE
TEXAS RANGER SUDDENLY FINDS AN INERT FORM....

WHOA, BOY--!
JUMPIN'
LIZARDS--!
IT'S A
GIRL! WE'RE
JUST IN
TIME!



SHE'LL BE BADLY
BURNED IN A SECOND!
GOOD---- SHE'S
WAKING UP!

OOOHH----
MY HEAD!

OH.../ WH...
WHAT HAS
HAPPENED?

YOU WERE ON FIRE!
C'MON....WE'VE GOT
TO GET OUT OF HERE!
WERE IN THE MIDDLE
OF A RAGING
FIRE!



HOW CAN WE
GET OUT? THE
FIRE IS ALL
AROUND
US!

WE'RE HEEMED IN FROM
ALL SIDES NOW! MIGHTY
STRANGE TO HAVE
SPREAD IN ALL
DIRECTIONS SO
FAST!

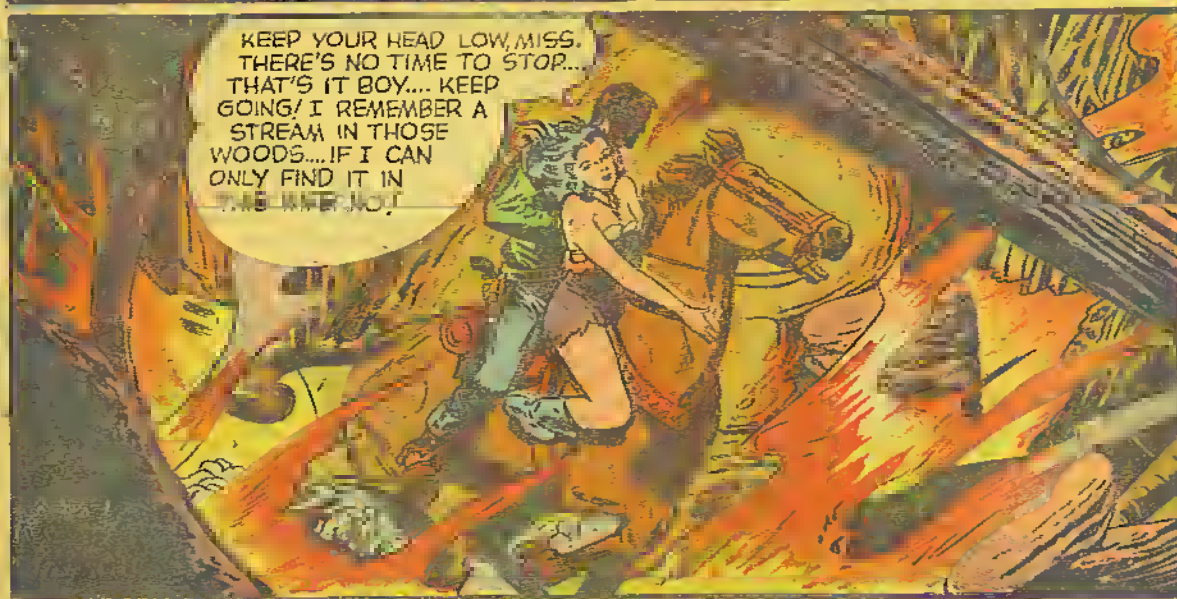


WE'RE **TRAPPED**....
WE'LL BE BURNED
TO DEATH!

NOT IF I CAN
HELP IT! HANG
ON.... WE'LL
FIND SOME
WAY OUT!

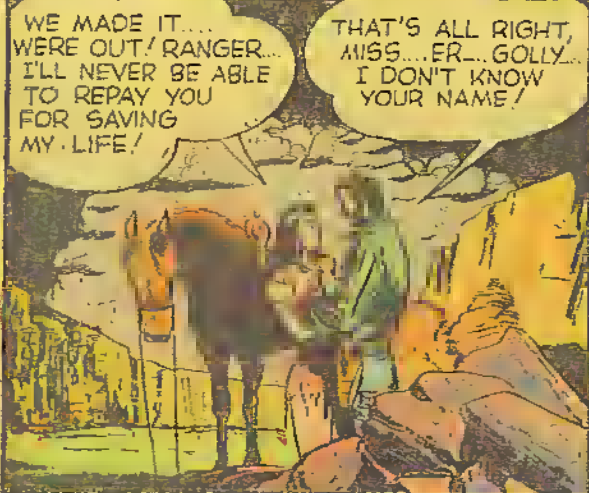


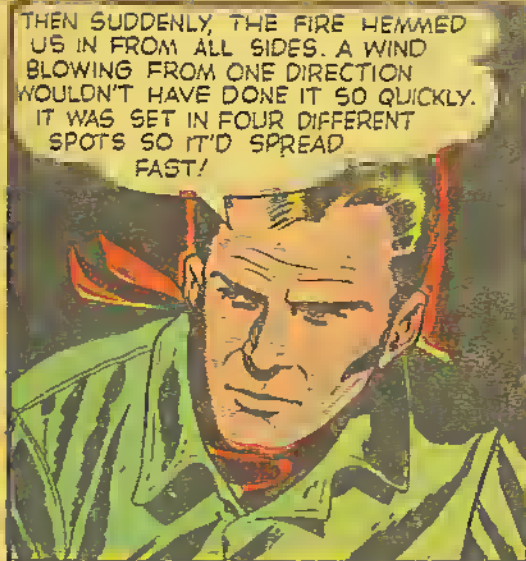
KEEP YOUR HEAD LOW, MISS.
THERE'S NO TIME TO STOP...
THAT'S IT BOY.... KEEP
GOING! I REMEMBER A
STREAM IN THOSE
WOODS....IF I CAN
ONLY FIND IT IN
THIS HELL NO!





AND SOON, RIDING THE STREAM, THE RANGER EMERGES FROM THE FIERY FOREST....





THEN SUDDENLY, THE FIRE HEMMED US IN FROM ALL SIDES. A WIND BLOWING FROM ONE DIRECTION WOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT SO QUICKLY. IT WAS SET IN FOUR DIFFERENT SPOTS SO IT'D SPREAD FAST!



BUT WHY SHOULD ANYONE WANT TO KILL ME....? WHY....WHY....?

SOMEBODY MEANT TO KILL YOU AND MAKE IT SEEM AS IF YOU'D DIED IN THE FIRE! MAYBE I CAN FIND OUT WHO AND WHY!



AS FAR AS THE MURDERER KNOWS, YOU'RE DEAD. I'LL GO TO TOWN AND SEE IF I CAN PICK UP A LEAD. MEANWHILE I'LL HIDE YOU IN A RANGER WAY-STATION, NEAR HERE!

NEXT DAY IN TOWN - THE RANGER BEGINS PUTTING HIS PLAN INTO EFFECT.



YES, RANGER, I'M HAL CREEGER, MANAGER HERE. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I'VE BAD NEWS, YOUR SINGER, CORA CARTER, WAS TRAPPED IN A BAD FOREST FIRE. I FOUND HER BODY!



WHAT...??? POOR CORA. THIS IS REALLY A SHOCK!

I KNOW HOW YOU MUST FEEL. IT LOOKS AS IF YOU'LL HAVE TO GET SOMEONE TO REPLACE HER. LET ME KNOW IF I CAN HELP!



AND STILL LATER....

SO FAR SO GOOD....I'VE SPREAD IT ALL OVER TOWN. NOW TO WAIT AND WATCH CLOSELY. SOONER OR LATER THE MAN I WANT WILL BE IN MY HAND.

SUDDENLY...
PARDON ME,
MA'M... I WASN'T
WATCHING,
RECKIN' I WAS
THINKIN' HARD!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT,
RANGER. SAY, IF
YOU'RE GOING TO BE
IN TOWN TONIGHT,
YOU MUST COME
LISTEN TO ME, I'M
THE NEW SINGER
CREEGAR
HIRED!

I SURE
WILL BE
THERE,
LISTENING,
MA'M.

GOOD...! I'M GOING
TO NAP TILL TONIGHT.
I'M DEAD TIRED. IT
TOOK ME ALL DAY
YESTERDAY TO LEARN
THE SONGS HE WANTS
ME TO SING TO-
NIGHT!

IT TOOK HER ALL DAY
YESTERDAY TO LEARN
THOSE SONGS? THEN
CREEGAR HIRED HER, TOLD
HER WHAT TO SING----
YESTER-
DAY!

THAT MEANS JUST ONE THING...
CREEGAR KNEW YESTERDAY HE'D NEED
TO REPLACE CORA---- BECAUSE HE
PLANNED TO
GET RID
OF HER!

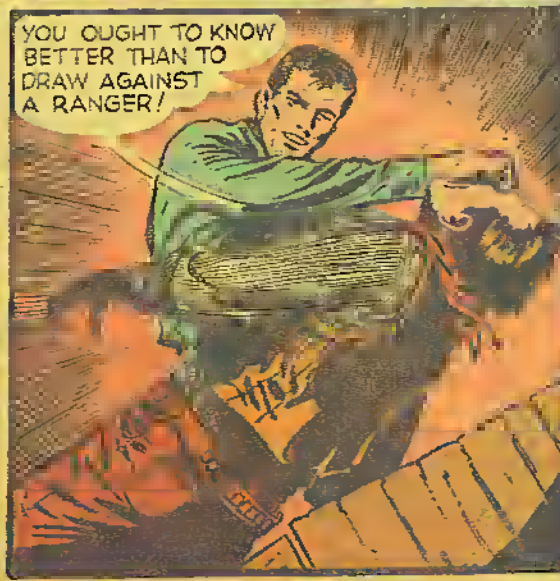
THAT DOES IT.... CREEGAR'S MY MAN!
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY HE
TRIED TO KILL CORA BUT I'LL
KNOW THAT TONIGHT!

LATER THAT NIGHT...
READY... THERE HE IS. HE'S IN FOR
A LITTLE SURPRISE! LET'S GO!!!!

AS YOU FOLKS
KNOW, CORA CARTER
DIED IN THAT FOREST
FIRE ---- A REAL
TRAGEDY. HOWEVER,
I'VE ANOTHER----

THAT'S ALL, CREEGAR....
I'VE A LITTLE SUR-
PRISE FOR YOU!

WHA----?? IT'S
HER--- SHE'S ALIVE!



NO...P...PLEASE
DON'T HIT ME
AGAIN...
DON'T!

IT LOOKS LIKE
YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH,
YOU VARMINT!

MAKE HIM TELL WHY
HE TRIED TO KILL
ME, RANGER. WE
STILL DON'T
KNOW THAT!

YOU HEARD HER,
CREEGAR.... START
TALKING, FAST!

YES, YES.... I'LL TELL. HER DRESSING
ROOM IS RIGHT NEXT TO MY OFFICE.
THE OTHER NIGHT, LATE, I WAS
PAYING OFF A GAMBLING DEBT. I'VE
BEEN USING THE HOTEL'S MONEY
FOR GAMBLING!

THEN I SAW THE
LIGHT ON IN CORA'S
DRESSING ROOM, I
KNEW SHE'D OVER-
HEARD ME, AND
I HAD TO
GET RID OF
HER!

NOW I SEE.... BUT ONE THING
IS WRONG HERE, CREEGAR....

I WASN'T IN MY ROOM
THAT NIGHT.... I
REMEMBER, I'D JUST
LEFT THE LIGHT
ON BY MISTAKE!

NO... NO...! BUT
WHEN I SAW THE
LIGHT.... I....
THOUGHT....
OH, NO!

AND SO LATER... CREEGAR BEHIND
PRISON BARS....

THANKS AGAIN,
RANGER... FOR
EVERYTHING, PLEASE
VISIT ME OFTEN...
I'LL BE SINGING
EVERY NIGHT
AGAIN
FROM /

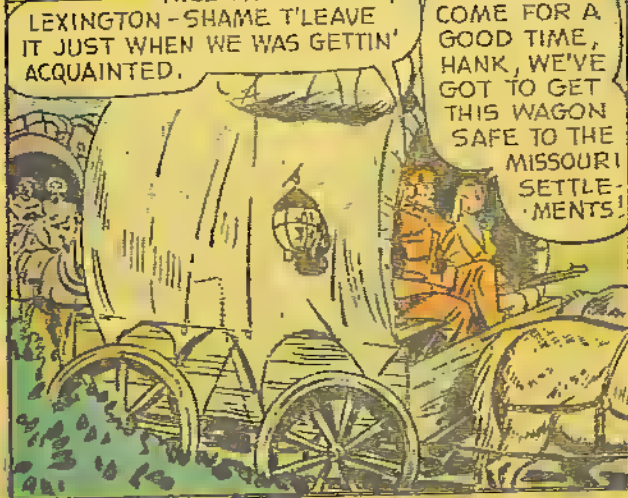
I'LL BE BACK SOME-
TIME, CORA. TILL
THEN....
GOOD-
BYE!

KIT WEST and the PRINCE OF PIONEERS

WHAT IS THE QUIRK IN MEN THAT THEY WILL HATE WHAT IS FOREIGN TO THEM? EVEN ON THE BLAZING FRONTIER WHERE THE HAND OF EVERY MAN IS NEEDED TO BATTLE NATURE AND THE CRUEL SAVAGES OF THE WILDERNESS, PREJUDICE REARS ITS UGLY HEAD TO BREED A HORRIFYING TRAGEDY!



LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, WHEN THE WEST WAS YOUNG, AND THE ONLY TRAINS WERE WAGON TRAINS...



NICE LITTLE BURG, LEXINGTON - SHAME T'LEAVE IT JUST WHEN WE WAS GETTIN' ACQUAINTED.

WE DIDN'T COME FOR A GOOD TIME, HANK, WE'VE GOT TO GET THIS WAGON SAFE TO THE MISSOURI SETTLEMENTS!



VLADIMIR! - STOP THE TRAIN!

ER - THE WHOLE TRAIN, SIR?

KIT! GIT A LOAD OF THET!



LET THEM GO, SIR. AMERICANS WILL NEVER UNDER-
STAND YOU. BETTER WE GO BACK TO MORDAVIA.

NO-I CAN NEVER GO BACK, SO- I SHALL BECOME A COMMON RIFLEMAN - COME, VLADIMIR!



DAYS PASS, FULL OF STRAIN AND TENSION...

I MUST HAVE A FORK AND KNIFE! I CANNOT EAT LIKE THESE PIGS!

THE FRONTIER ISN'T A PALACE, PRINCE. YOU'LL HAVE TO FOREGO MANY COMFORTS.

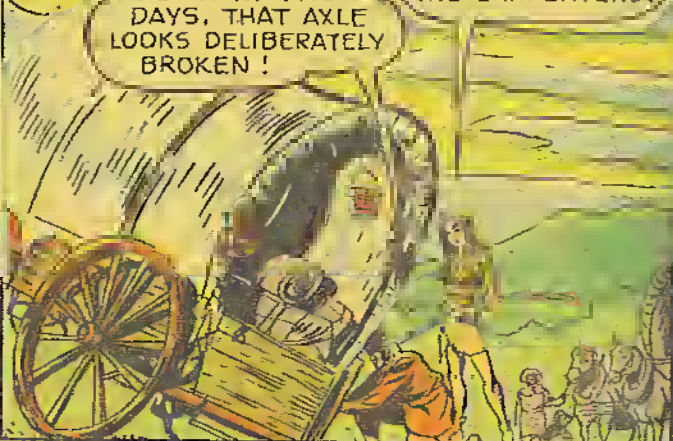
AYE, THE WILDERNESS IS FOR MEN, NOT OVERDRESSED SISSIES!



DAYS LATER

THIS IS THE FIFTH WAGON TO BREAK DOWN IN TWO DAYS. THAT AXLE LOOKS DELIBERATELY BROKEN!

YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS, TOM. GET THE CARPENTERS.



A DAY WILL COME! I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE, AMERICAN SWINE...

SWINE? I'M GOIN' TO POKE HIS TEETH OUT, PRINCE OR NO PRINCE!

NO, HANK - HIS HIGHNESS IS UNDERGOING ADJUSTMENT.



THE FOLLOWING WEEK -

IT'S A REGULAR EPIDEMIC. DOC SAYS IT'S FOOD POISONING. I WONDER WHO COULDA DONE IT...

NOBODY. JUST BAD LUCK.



I CAN'T MAKE HIM OUT, HANK. WHAT BRINGS A ROYAL PRINCE TO THE FRONTIER?

THE EVIL EYE! WHY, WE'VE HAD NUTHIN' BUT BREAKDOWN AN' SICKNESS SINCE HE JOINED US.



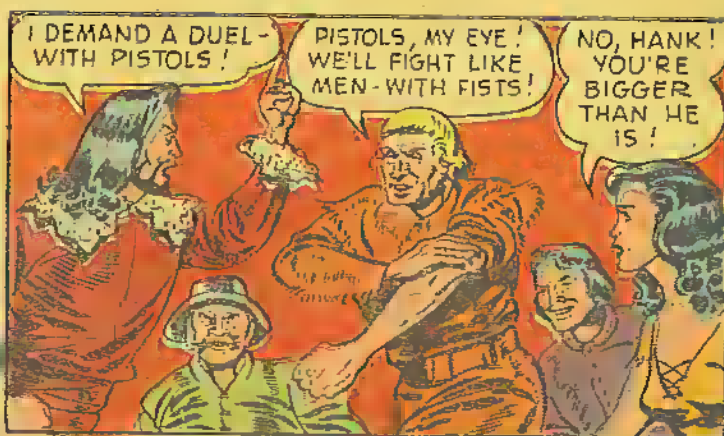
AN' WHO KNOWS IF HE IS A PRINCE? HOW COME A FURRINER SPEAKS PERFECT ENGLISH?

NOT ONLY ENGLISH, YOU IGNORAMUS, BUT TWENTY OTHER LANGUAGES!





WHO'S AN
IGNOR-**WHATSIS?**



**I DEMAND A DUEL -
WITH PISTOLS!**

**PISTOLS, MY EYE!
WE'LL FIGHT LIKE
MEN - WITH FISTS!**

**NO, HANK!
YOU'RE
BIGGER
THAN HE
IS!**



**I DON'T CARE!
I'LL - UGH-H!**

**SORRY, HANK,
YOU ASKED
FOR IT!**



**THIS BICKERING
AND BAITING
MUST STOP!
WE'RE NOW
ENTERING INJUN
TERRITORY: FIGHTS
AMONG OURSELVES
ARE FATAL!**

**THEN
GET RID
O' THET
FAKE
PRINCE!
MEBBE
HE'S AN
INJUN SPY
TOO!**



THAT NIGHT...

**FOR YOUR SAKE, PRINCE,
GO HOME TO MORDAVIA.
THE MEN THINK YOU'RE
A JINX-- IF WE HAVE ANY
TROUBLE WITH CHIEF
TOSHUNTO,
YOU'LL BE
BLAMED!**

**I CAN
NEVER GO
'BACK, MISS
WEST. YEARS
AGO, IN
MORDAVIA,
I HAD A BAD
REPUTATION
FOR WINE,
WOMEN AND
DUELLING.**



**THEN I MET ELENA, PRINCESS OF
BOHEMIA. I LOVED HER BUT HER BROTHER
OBJECTED TO OUR MARRIAGE. HE
CHALLENGED ME TO A DUEL...**

**N-NO. ONE OF YOU
MAY BE KILLED!**

**YES, AND IT WILL BE
THIS WORTHLESS
SCOUNDREL!**

**MY SECONDS
WILL CALL
UPON YOURS THIS
AFTERNOON...**



**- I GAVE ELENA MY WORD I WOULD FIRE IN
THE AIR, BUT MY PISTOL WENT OFF PRE-
MATURELY. ELENA'S BROTHER WAS KILLED!**

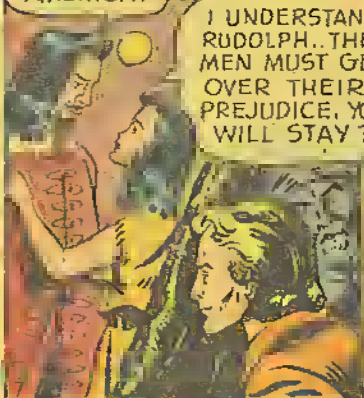
**B-BUT I SWEAR, ELENA -
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...**

**LIAR! YOU
MURDERED
MY BROTHER!**

"THAT NIGHT, OVERCOME WITH GRIEF, ELENA LEAPED TO HER DEATH FROM THE CASTLE WALL."



TO ME, EUROPE WAS ELENA. WITH HER GONE, I CAN NEVER RETURN. WITH MY FAITHFUL SERVANT, VLADIMIR, I CAME HERE TO BE OF SERVICE TO AMERICA.



AH, BUT MR. JINY HAS A SLICK TONGUE! KIT SWALLOWED THE WHOLE FAIRY-TALE!

BAH! THE SNEAKIN' RENEGADE! HE'D BETTER BRING NO MORE BAD LUCK TO THIS WAGON TRAIN.



NEXT DAY -- A SCOUTING PARTY, OPERATING A MILE AHEAD...



TWO HOURS LATER-

DEAD! EVERY BLAMED ONE OF THEM!



STOP THOSE ACCUSATIONS! HANK RAN INTO AN AMBUSH! WE'VE JUST GOT TO BE MORE CAREFUL!

BAH. LOOKIT HIM SMILE. ENJOYIN' TH' WOOL YOU'VE PULLED OVER HER EYES, EH?



BUT THE BAD LUCK CONTINUED. THE SUCCESS OF TOSHUNTO'S SNIPERS WAS PHENOMENAL...

INJUNS!

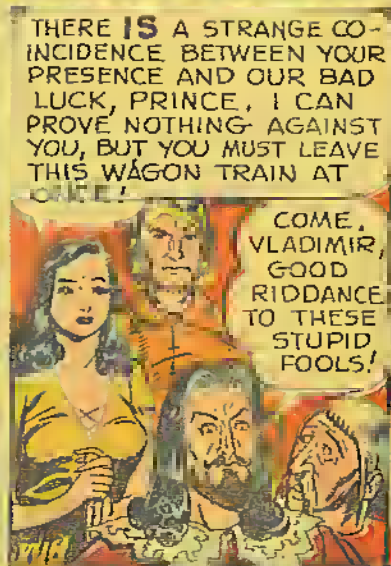
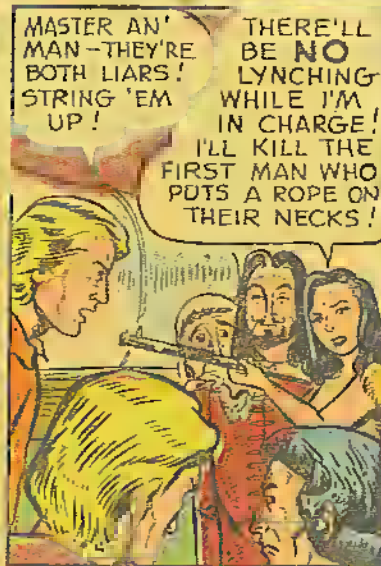


AMBUSHES MULTIPLIED...

YOU WERE ONE OF THIS PARTY. HOW'D YOU MANAGE TO ESCAPE?

THEY SENT ME AWAY, POOR FELLOWS. THEY SAID I'D JINX THEM.





LET ME
AT THE
SCALPIN'
WRETCH!

NO, BEN--HE'S
TOSHUNTO'S SON!
WE CAN THREATEN
TO KILL HIM
UNLESS TOSHUNTO
GIVES UP HIS RAIDS!

SEE, KIT? HOW OUR
LUCK CHANGED SINCE
THAT FAKE PRINCE
LEFT CAMP?

I'VE A PLAN, VLADIMIR...
I'M GOING TO FREE
TOSHUNTO'S SON. THEN YOU
WILL TAKE A MESSAGE TO
KIT WEST.



I AM FRIEND OF
INDIAN. TAKE
ME TO TOSHUNTO.
I HAVE PLAN TO
KILL ALL WHITE
MEN. I HATE
WHITE MEN!

YES, YOU
FREE
CHIEF'S
SON,
YOU
MUST BE
FRIEND.

AN
HOUR
LATER

THEN THE
PRINCE SOCKED
ME, WHEN I
WOKE UP, THE
INJUN WAS GONE.

THE
PRINCE'S
SERVANT!
KILL
THE...!

D-OON'T
SHOOT!
I HAVE A
MESSAGE!



THE PRINCE! YOU--
ARRGHH!



THE PRINCE IS HEARTBROKEN
THAT YOU DO NOT BELIEVE HE
WANTS TO HELP AMERICA.
HE SAVED TOSHUNTO'S SON
TO MAKE TOSHUNTO
BELIEVE HE IS INJUN'S
FRIEND... ONLY TO LEAD

THEM INTO AN AMBUSH
TOMORROW AT
DAWN AT SILENT
CREEK.

HE'S LYIN'!
HANG HIM!!

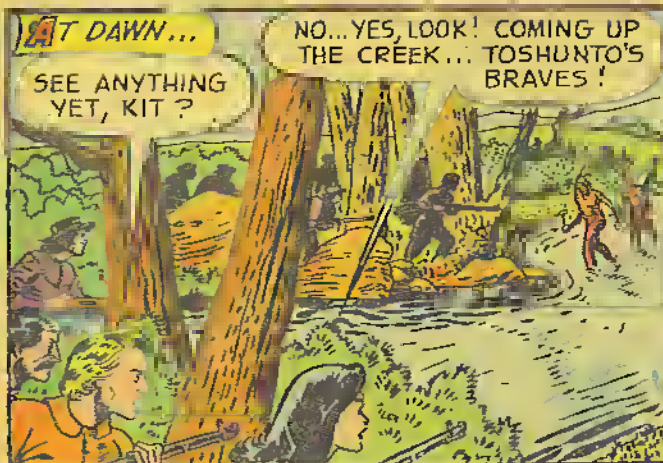
NO, I'VE GOT A BETTER
PLAN--WE'LL GET TO
SILENT CREEK BEFORE
DAWN. WE'LL SEE
WHO WALKS INTO AN
AMBUSH, TOSHUNTO
OR US! MEANWHILE,
HOLD VLADIMIR
PRISONER!

AT THAT TIME, AT
TOSHUNTO'S CAMP...

...WE GO, BUT WE MAKE
SURE YOU NO TRICK US.
WE TIE YOU TO STAKE,
IF WHITES AMBUSH US,
MY BRAVES BURN YOU
TO DEATH--
UNDERSTAND?

(GULP!)
U-UNDER-
STAND!!!





AT DAWN...

SEE ANYTHING
YET, KIT?

NO... YES, LOOK! COMING UP
THE CREEK... TOSHUNTO'S
BRAVES!



All--!!

TOGETHER,
NOW--FIRE!



THE WHITE DEVIL TRICKED
US! SEND BACK WORD--HE
DIES!!

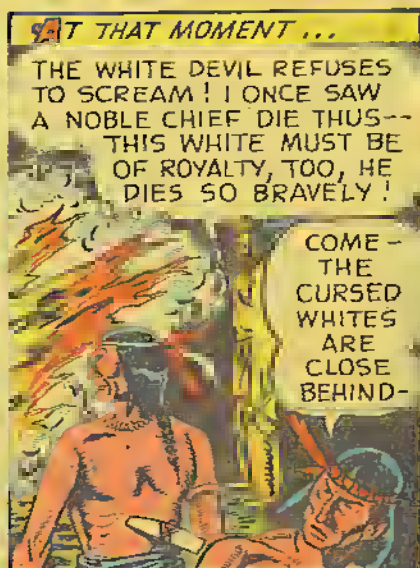
YES,
TOSHUNTO!



WHAT A LICKING!
THEY NEVER HAD
A CHANCE!

THANKS TO
THE PRINCE! WE
HAD HIM ALL WRONG
VLADIMIR!

YES-- BUT
NOW THEY
KILL HIM!
(SOB!)



AT THAT MOMENT...

THE WHITE DEVIL REFUSES
TO SCREAM! I ONCE SAW
A NOBLE CHIEF DIE THUS--
THIS WHITE MUST BE
OF ROYALTY, TOO, HE
DIES SO BRAVELY!

COME--
THE
CURSED
WHITES
ARE
CLOSE
BEHIND--



SHORTLY AFTER... A SAD
SIGHT...

HE SUFFERED
AGONIES FOR US,
AND WE DIDN'T
BELIEVE HIM!

(SOB!)
M-MASTER!!

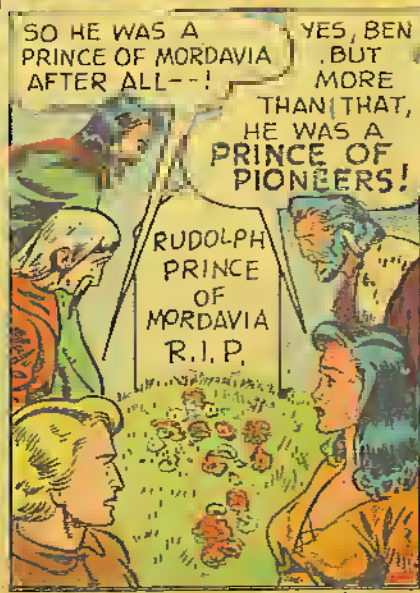


THREE MONTHS LATER
AT THE MISSOURI
SETTLEMENTS...

SOME PEOPLE TO
SEE YOU, KIT. DIPLOMATS,
THEY SAID.

VLADIMIR!
AT LAST WE
HAVE FOUND
YOU!

OH, YOUR
HIGHNESS--
YOUR
BROTHER
IS DEAD!



SO HE WAS A
PRINCE OF MORDAVIA
AFTER ALL--!

YES, BEN
BUT
MORE

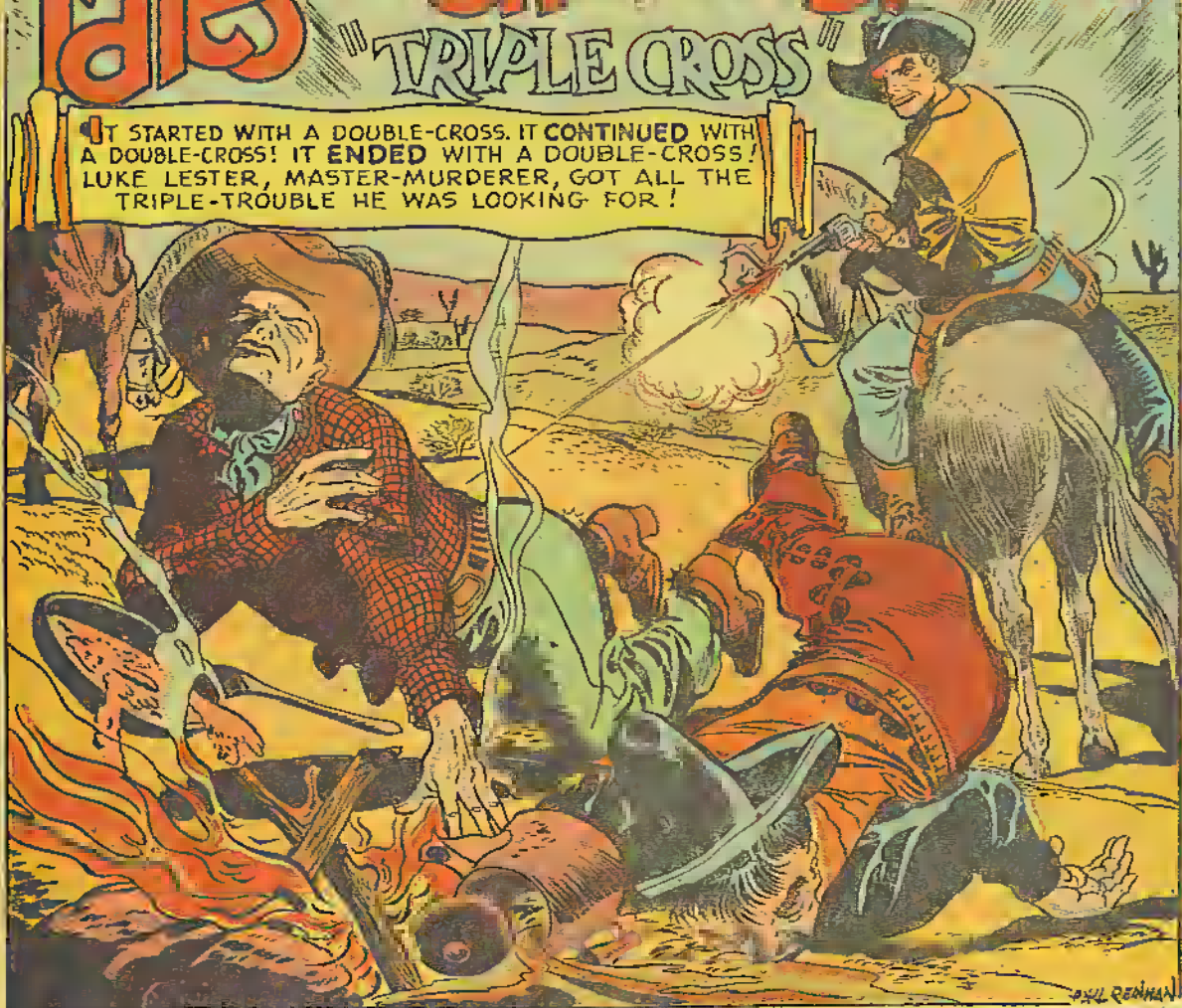
THAN THAT,
HE WAS A
PRINCE OF
PIONEERS!

RUDOLPH
PRINCE
OF
MORDAVIA
R.I.P.

Tales of the Silent Spaces

"TRIPLE CROSS"

IT STARTED WITH A DOUBLE-CROSS. IT CONTINUED WITH A DOUBLE-CROSS! IT ENDED WITH A DOUBLE-CROSS! LUKE LESTER, MASTER-MURDERER, GOT ALL THE TRIPLE-TROUBLE HE WAS LOOKING FOR!



JOEL REEDMAN

IT ALL BEGAN WITH A ROBBERY...

ANDY COVERS THE BACK WAY. ME AN' PINTO'LL WALK IN FIRST. WHEN YOU HEAR SHOOTIN'... GIVE 'EM - WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT, ANDY!

LEAVE IT TO ME, LUKE.

WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE
LUKE LESTER
ANDY DUGAN
PINTO MAURO
FOR BANK ROB-
AND MURDER
\$5,000
REWARD!

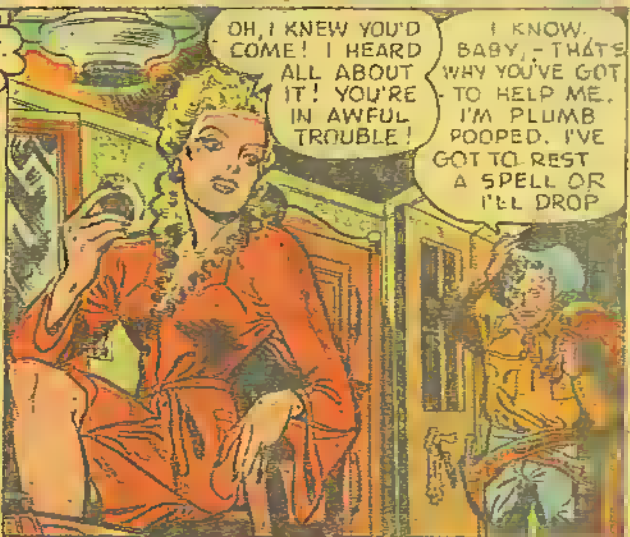
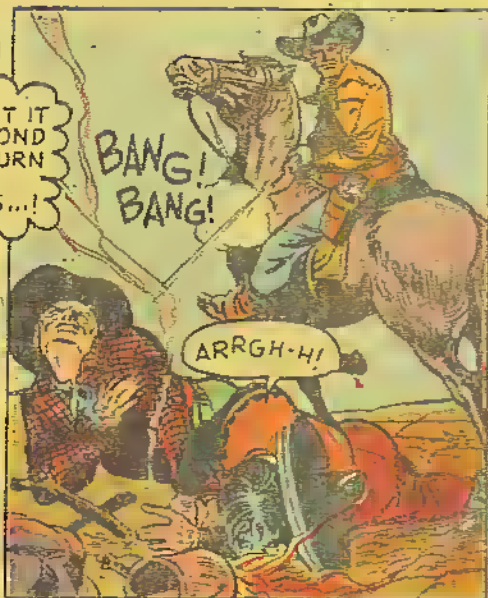
NATIONAL BANK



OKAY, PINTO. LET'S GO, SHOOT FIRST, ASK QUESTIONS SECOND.

WHY NOT? THEY GOT ENOUGH PINNED ONTO US TO STRETCH OUR NECKS TEN TIMES OVER!







PINTO AN' ANDY...
THEY WEREN'T SO
LUCKY. THEY CAUGHT
IT FROM THE
POSSE.

YOU'RE
LYIN',
LUKE.
THE PAPERS
SAY ALL THREE
OF YOU
ESCAPED!



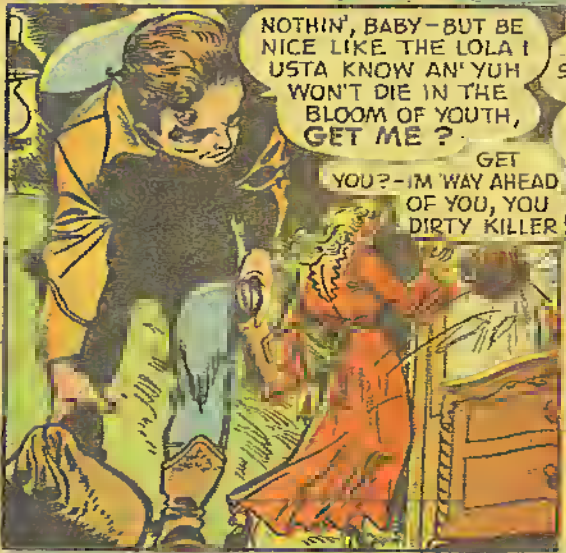
THAT \$50,000. WAS THE
CHANCE OF A LIFETIME FOR
BOTH OF US, LOLA. I'M SENDIN'
FOR YUH ONCE I MAKE MEXICO,
\$50,000. SPLIT THREE WAYS
AIN'T MUCH - SO I LET PINTO
AN' ANDY
HAVE IT.



I DON'T LIKE THE WAY
YOU'RE KICKIN' UP A FUSS
'BOUT BEAT-UP POLECATS
WHO ALWAYS TOOK THEIR
CUES FROM ME!

I'M THINKIN'-
LUKE - WHAT'S
TO STOP A
SMART GUY LIKE
YOU FROM
GETTING
RID OF
ME?

(GASP!)
YOU MURDERED
THEM IN COLD
BLOOD?! PINTO,
WHO'D HAVE DIED
FOR YOU...
AND ANDY!



NOTHIN', BABY - BUT BE
NICE LIKE THE LOLA I
USTA KNOW AN' YUH
WON'T DIE IN THE
BLOOM OF YOUTH,
GET ME?

GET
YOU? - I'M WAY AHEAD
OF YOU, YOU
DIRTY KILLER!



YOU
SPITTIN', SCREECHIN'
SHE-TIGER!
YUH
DOUBLE-
CROSSED
ME!

SHERIFF, HE'S UP HERE! LUKE LESTER!
HE'S... MPPPHHH!

SHERIFF!
LOOK!



THEY'RE COMIN' DOWN THE
BACK STAIRS! BUT LESTER'S
USIN' LOLA LAMAR
FOR A SHIELD!

SHE GETS
IT, IF YOU
BAT AN
EYELASH!

HE
MURDERED
PINTO AND
ANDY!
SHOOT!
SHOOT!



CAIN'T, MISS,
WE'D HIT YOU.
WE'LL CATCH
LUKE, ALL RIGHT.
HE CAINT GET
FAR... HE'S
GOT TO CROSS
THE DESERT...

SMART BOY!
THE SHERIFF
LIKES TO
PROTECT THE
LADIES, EH?



WELL, PROTECT
HER NOW - HA, HA!
GIDDAP, YA SON
OF SATAN!

OH!!

BANG!
BANG!

SHE'S DEAD! AIN'T THERE **NOTHIN'** SACRED TO THET COYOTE?

NOTHIN' BUT HIS GREED FOR GOLD, ROUND UP EVERY GUN-SLINGER IN TOWN! THET TRIGGER-MAD SKUNK WON'T HAVE MUCH CHANCE OF GITTIN' AWAY.



FOUR MISERABLE, AGONIZING HOURS LATER...

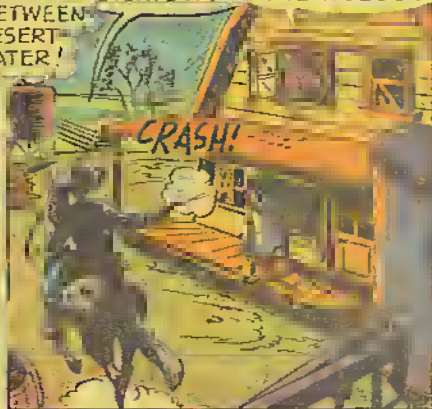
STARTIN' TO GIT SANDY ALREADY—I MUST BE GITTIN' CLOSE TO UNCLE WILLIE'S FARM... THE LAST STOP BETWEEN THE DESERT AN' WATER!



AS DAWN BURSTS RED OVER THE EDGE OF THE DESERT...

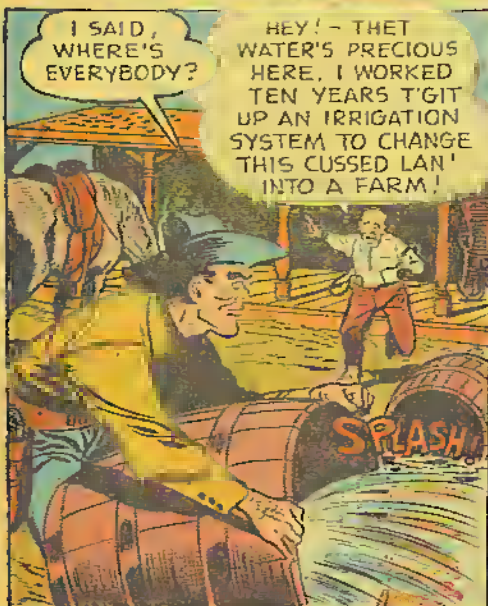
HEY, THERE, **UNCLE WILLIE!** C'MON OUT! WHERE'S EVERYBODY?

BE THET YUH, LUKE? WHAT'IN TARNATION BE YUH DOIN' IN THIS NECK OF THE WOODS?



I SAID, WHERE'S EVERYBODY?

HEY!—THET WATER'S PRECIOUS HERE. I WORKED TEN YEARS T'GIT UP AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM TO CHANGE THIS CUSSED LAN' INTO A FARM!



THET'S TOO BAD, UNCLE WILLIE. YER ABOUT TO LOSE THEM TEN YEARS. YUH STILL DIDN'T SAY WHERE EVERYBODY IS!

THEY ALL WENT TO THE FAIR AT SHOTGUN—STOP THET HACKIN', LUKE! WITHOUT THET WATER THIS FARM'D DRY UP LIKE A PRUNE, GIVE US THET AXE!

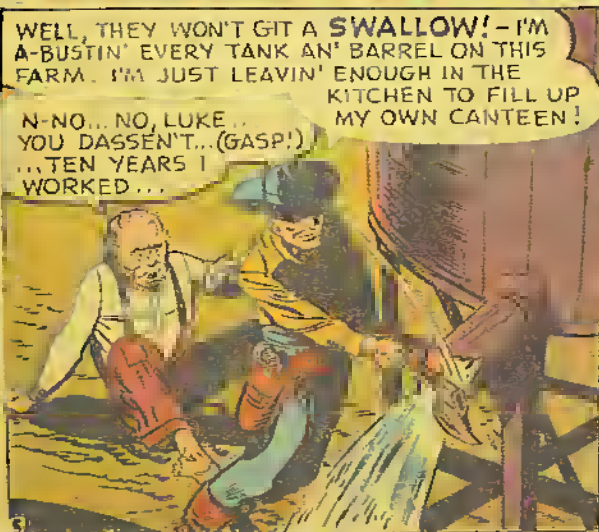


Y DON'T UNDERSTAND, UNCLE WILLIE, THERE'S A POSSE THAT'LL BE COUNTIN' ON GITTIN' WATER TO GIT ACROSS THET DESERT AFTER ME...



WELL, THEY WON'T GIT A **SWALLOW!**—I'M A-BUSTIN' EVERY TANK AN' BARREL ON THIS FARM. I'M JUST LEAVIN' ENOUGH IN THE KITCHEN TO FILL UP MY OWN CANTEEN!

N-NO... NO, LUKE... YOU DASSEN'T... (GASP!)... TEN YEARS I WORKED...



TOO BAD, OLD RAT! TOO BAD! GIT INSIDE AN' FILL THIS CANTEEN WHILE I BUST UP THE REST OF YORE IRRIGATION WHATEVER—YUH CALL-IT! GIT GOIN'!



NO MAN CAN MAKE MORE'N FIVE MILES
ACROSS THE DESERT WITHOUT DYIN' O'
THIRST. I ONCE WATCHED A GREASER
GO MAD-- HE STARTED SCREAMIN'
LIKE A CHICKEN WITHOUT HIS HAID.
HEH-HEH- THEN HE SAW RAIN...
RAIN THAT WASN'T THERE!
I'LL FIX THET POSSE!



I WON'T. THOUGHT
HOPE YUH CHOKED ON IT!
I WOULDN'T TEST
WHETHER YUH FILLED
IT, EH? YORE SMART,
UNCLE WILLIE! YUH
BETTER NOT TRY
TO DOUBLE-CROSS
YORE FAVORITE
NEPHEW, HEH-HEH.



TELL THET POSSE
I'LL BE THINKIN' OF
'EM WHILE I'M
GUZZLING TEQUILA
AN' DANCIN'
RHUMBAS IN MEXICO.
ADIOS, SUCKER! TEN
YEARS! - HA, HA!



THREE HOURS LATER...

NOT A DROP ON
THE FARM,
SHERIFF, THET
SNAKE-IN-THE-
GRASS GOT AWAY
LIKE HE SAID

NO. LUKE WON'T
GIT AWAY, SHERIFF.
HE'LL REMEMBER
HIS UNCLE WILLIE--
LEASTWAYS, BEFORE
HE GOES MAD!

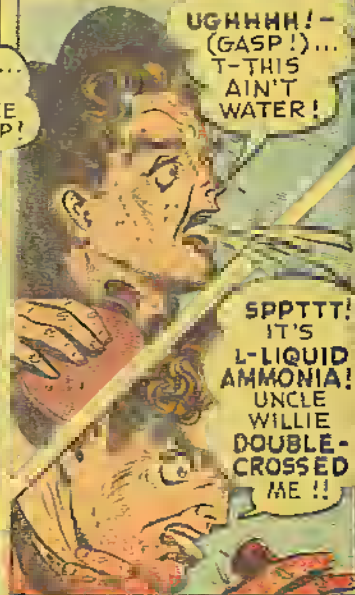


MEANWHILE, ON THE
BAKING DESERT...

CAIN'T GO MUCH FURTHER...
HORSE DAID...(GASP!)...
N-NO REST... I GOTTA TAKE
A DRINK...OR I... I'LL DROP!
-AHHH!
NICE COOL
WATER -



UGHHHH! -
(GASP!)...
T-THIS
AIN'T
WATER!



A HALF HOUR LATER...

HA-HA-HA!
(GASP!) I... I'LL
FOOL YUH, UNCLE
WILLIE... NO
VULTURES
WILL GET
LUKE
LESTER!



I MADE IT
RAIN! RAIN!
HA-HA-HA-HA!
(SOB!)...(SOB!)...
SEE ALL THE
PRETTY RAIN!
GOLDEN RAIN!



-- AND FEASTED,
UNMINDFUL OF THE
GREAT TREASURE
WHICH CAUSED
LUKE LESTER'S
TRIPLE CROSS



BUT THE VULTURES SLANTED DOWN
THROUGH THE "GOLDEN RAIN"...

SHARP AND FLAT

"SWING YOUR PARTNER" ⁱⁿ

IN THE OLD WEST THERE WERE NO RADIOS AND NO JUKE BOXES, BUT THE FOLKS LIKED NOTHING BETTER THAN A GOOD EVENING OF MUSIC AND DANCING AND AROUND HIGH HOLLOW THEY KNEW WHOM TO CALL ON FOR THE MUSIC. IT WAS THOSE TWO WANDERING MUSICIANS, THOSE MUSIC-MAKERS OF THE OLD WEST-- SHARP AND FLAT--AND SOMETIMES THEY PROVIDED MORE THAN JUST COUNTRY MUSIC!



ONE DAY, AT A COLONY OF NEW SETTLERS JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN--

HERE WE ARE, FLAT. LOOKS MIGHTY QUIET FOR A NEW SETTLEMENT.

SURE DOES, SHARP. WE OUGHTA BE ABLE TO PICK UP A JOB OR TWO HERE. THEY COULD STAND SOME MUSIC. LET'S ASK THET FELLER.



SAY, PARDNER, HOW ABOUT SOME REAL HOE-DOWN MUSIC AROUND HERE?

YEP--WE PLAY A MEAN SQUARE-DANCE. MEBBE YOU HEARD OF US--SHARP AND FLAT.

HOPE, NEVER DID! AND NOBODY WANTS ANY MUSIC 'ROUND HERE! NO SIR!



SEE--WE'RE A-MOVIN'!
WE BOUGHT THIS LAND
BACK EAST FROM THE
AJAX LAND COMPANY
BUT IT'S JINXED!
WE'RE PULLIN' OUT.

BUT THAT'S A TOTAL
LOSS--YOU'LL LOSE ALL
YOU PAID FOR IT.

SUDDENLY--
CARSON--YOU
HERE?

YEP, I'M
BUYIN' THIS
JINXED LAND
OFF THESE
FOLKS FOR HALF
PRICE...HELPIN'
'EM OUT.

THAT'S RIGHT,
MR. CARSON,
HERE, IS REAL
GENEROUS,
GIVIN' US
HALF WHAT
WE PAID
AJAX FOR
BAD LAND.

WHY DO YOU
SAY THE LAND'S
JINXED?

SON, WHEN CATTLE DIE LIKE
FLIES AND FOLKS TURN SICK,
FER NO GOOD REASON--THAT
LAND'S JINXED. THAT AJAX
OUTFIT SOLD US BAD
LAND, THAT'S ALL!

I'M GLAD TO DO THIS FOR
YOU GOOD PEOPLE. I'M
BIG-HEARTED THAT WAY,
REMEMBER, YA'LL ALL
BE AT MY FAREWELL
PARTY FOR YA
TONIGHT.

WE'RE MIGHTY GRATEFUL,
MR. CARSON--GETTIN' HALF
OUR MONEY BACK IS
BETTER'N NOTHIN'!

LET'S GO, FLAT. NO
MUSIC WANTED HERE
WHEN DID THAT BLOW-
HARD, CARSON, GET
SO GENEROUS?

SEARCH ME!
I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D
DO ANYONE A KIND TURN.
ESPECIALLY WITH
MONEY INVOLVED.
BUT HE'S DOIN' IT!

HIM AN' HIS PARTIES!
HE HIRES US FOR NEARLY
NOTHIN' AND MAKES US
PLAY TILL WE DROP.

YOU'RE RIGHT, SHARP,
BUT IT'S BETTER THAN
NO WORK AT ALL!

UH-SHARP
DON'T GET MAD,
BUT I SAW THIS
BIRD CARSON
BEFORE. I
AGREED WE'D
PLAY AT THE
PARTY HE'S
THROWIN'
TONIGHT.

AW, FLAT--
I TOLDJA NOT
TO TAKE ANY
ANYMORE
JOBS FROM
HIM! SHUCKS!
NOW WE'LL HAVE
TO GO
THROUGH WIT
IT. C'MON--
LET'S GET
BACK!

AND SO, THAT NIGHT--
SWING YOUR PARTNER,
ONE-TWO-THREE--
TURN TO THE
LEFT AN' THERE
SHE'LL BE--

PSST--
SHARP, HERE
COMES
CARSON
AGAIN!

LOUDER--PLAY
LOUDER, YA HEAR?
WADDAYA THINK
I'M PAYIN' YA FOR?
LOUDER AND
FASTER!

YES, SIR,
WE'LL TRY!



C'MON
FOLKS!
HAVE A
GOOD
TIME!
IT'S ALL
ON ME,
Y'KNOW!

THE SKINFINT!
WONDER WHERE
HE GETS HIS
MONEY... BUYIN'
LAND AT
HALF-PRICE

TH' MORE
I THINK
OF IT, THE
LESS IT
SEEMS LIKE
HIM-HELPIN'
THOSE
SETTLERS

OUT SO THEY
ONLY LOSE
HALF THEIR
MONEY.

IT BEATS
ME TOO.
CARSON
NEVER DID
ANYTHING
NICE FOR,
ANYBODY

YOU GOIN'?

TO GET MY
MEGAPHONE
FOR THE
REEL. IT'S
IN THE
BACK. KEEP
PLAYIN'!

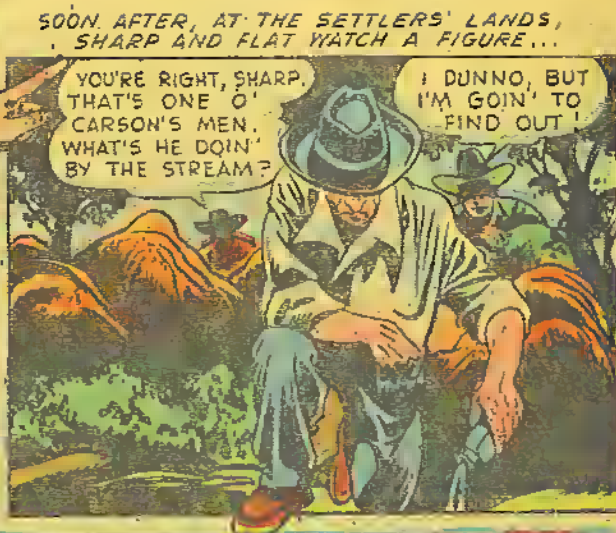
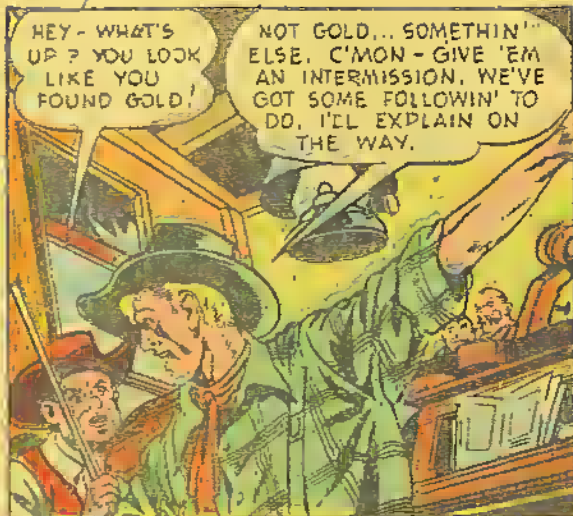
HERE
IT IS
HEY,
THAT'S
CARSON'S
VOICE!

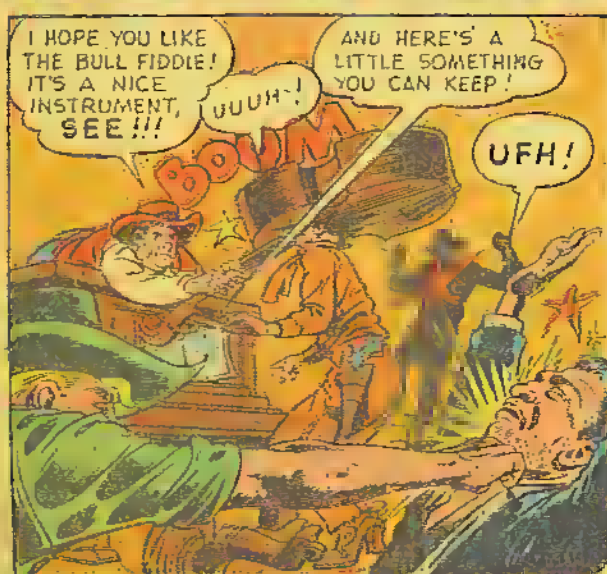
THEM
SETTLERS
ARE ALL
WILLIN'
TO SELL
BOSS. ONLY
A FEW
ARE HOLDIN'

YOU BETTER
GET OUT THE
NOW. TAKE
MORE ARSEH!
YOU KNOW
WHAT TO
CONVINCE
THEM THAT

THEY'RE
JINXED!



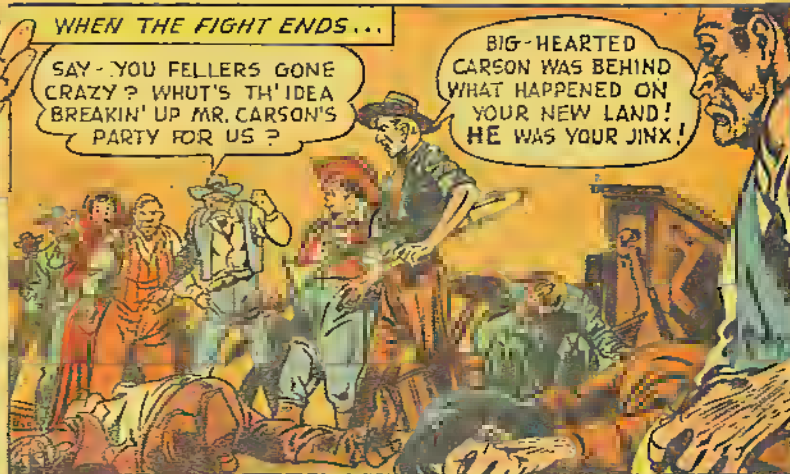






THIS IS A
NEW WAY
TO PLAY
THE SLIDE
TROMBONE!

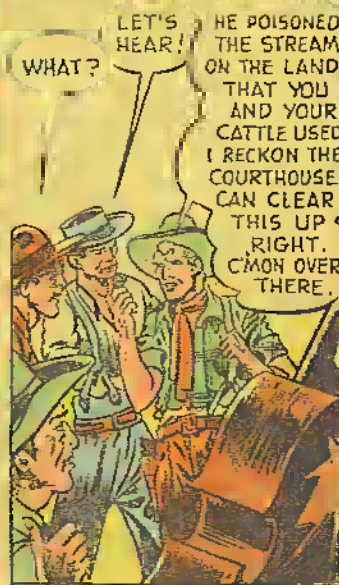
OWOOO!



WHEN THE FIGHT ENDS...

SAY - YOU FELLERS GONE
CRAZY? WHUT'S TH' IDEA
BREAKIN' UP MR. CARSON'S
PARTY FOR US?

BIG-HEARTED
CARSON WAS BEHIND
WHAT HAPPENED ON
YOUR NEW LAND!
HE WAS YOUR JINK!



WHAT?

LET'S
HEAR!

HE POISONED
THE STREAM
ON THE LAND
THAT YOU
AND YOUR
CATTLE USED
I RECKON THE
COURTHOUSE
CAN CLEAR
THIS UP
RIGHT.
C'MON OVER
THERE.



AND SOON AT THE
COURTHOUSE RECORD BOOKS...

HERE IT
IS -- AJAX
LAND CO.,
C. CARSON,
OWNER.

YOU SEE -- HE SOLD
THE LAND UNDER
THAT NAME, THEN
WAS GETTING YOU
TO SELL BACK AT
HALF-PRICE.



HE INTENDED SELLING
TO OTHER SETTLERS,
THEN PULL THE SAME
STUNT. IT EVEN MADE
HIM LOOK BIG-HEARTED
BUT HIS SCHEME IS
DONE FOR.

WE'LL SEE HE GETS
LOCKED UP PRONTO.
AND WE FOLKS OWE
YOU FELLERS A LOT.
HOW 'BOUT FINISHIN'
THAT PARTY
OURSELVES.



AND SOON AFTER --
SWING YOUR PARDNER,
HOLD 'ER TIGHT --
DANCIN' MAKES THE
DAY END RIGHT!

RIGHT --!
H'RAAAY FOR
SHARP'N FLAT
-- RAAAY!!

YAHOOO --!
THIS IS A
REAL PARTY.
THANKS TO
SHARP
AND
FLAT!